

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA  
BALTIMORE  
NEWS AMERICAN

E. 219,257  
S. 313,454

OCT 3 1965

## Washington Wonderland

# Cuban Refugee Warns It 'Can Happen Here'

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 2 — A former Havana busi-

nessman who managed the Cuban Electric Power Com-  
pany is currently lecturing throughout the hemisphere  
on the lesson we can learn from his unhappy homeland.

This eye-opening address effec-  
tively refutes the long-held theory  
that communism makes real head-  
way only in city slums and under-  
privileged areas of the world.

Serafin G. Menocal, a graduate  
electrical engineer and former  
president of Cuba's National  
Council of Boy Scouts, says that  
the laboring class and farm work-  
ers were actually Fidel Castro's  
greatest stumbling block in his  
campaign to subvert Cuba.

THE EASIEST prey, he de-  
clares, were students, politicians,  
churchmen, and "businessmen  
who generally remained aloof  
from politics."

As a Rotarian and Lion's Club  
president in Cuba Mr. Menocal  
was in a position to know. With  
an engineer's precision he care-  
fully documents the steps by  
which Castro took over his native  
land, and warns that unless others  
profit by those mistakes, it can  
happen here and in South Amer-  
ica.

To prove his point that commu-  
nism does not necessarily feed on  
poverty and illiteracy, he makes  
these interesting points about pre-  
Castro Cuba: Among Latin Amer-  
ican countries Cuba ranked first  
per capita in TV broadcasting sta-  
tions and receivers, motion picture  
attendance, and percentage of na-  
tional income invested in educa-  
tion.

IT RANKED second in value of  
imports, exports, and radio re-  
ceivers; third in income, number  
of newspapers and magazines,  
telephones, automobiles and elec-  
tric power consumption per cap-  
ita.

One of every five Cubans had a  
radio; one in 20 a TV set, and one  
in 27 an automobile. According to  
a U. S. government report Cubans  
were "among the better fed peo-  
ple of the world," before Castro.

Cuba had the lowest mortality  
rate in the Western Hemisphere.  
Its industrial workers were pro-  
tected by strong unions, and its  
farm workers by legislation which  
amounted to a profit-sharing ar-  
rangement. The pre-Communist  
island had an extensive public  
school system free from discrim-  
ination. It was cheaper and easier  
to get a college education in Cuba  
than the U. S.

"IT WAS not the illiterate or  
the poor who were responsible for  
the take-over by Castro," Menocal  
says, but those members of the  
middle and wealthy classes who  
were "too absorbed in their own  
pursuits" and liked the sound of  
Castro's promises.

Menocal, like many other edu-  
cated Cubans, hated dictator Ba-  
tista and wanted to depose him.  
They yearned for restoration of  
their constitution, honest elections  
and a government free from

Then came Fidel Castro, riding  
the crest of Batista's unpopularity  
and promising everything to  
everybody. For a time he fooled  
many, including influential seg-  
ments of the American press and  
our Central Intelligence agency.

Shortly after the Castro coup  
this correspondent, while inter-  
viewing CIA Director Allen Dul-  
les, was ~~happily~~ told: "Castro is  
not a Communist."

ON THE basis of information  
secured from a non-governmental  
source I nevertheless wrote that  
he was, and cited evidence of  
Castro's intimacy with the then-  
little-known Red, "Che" Guevara.  
A friend told me that at a top-  
level staff meeting at CIA re-  
cently my headlined article was  
produced, and an official com-  
mented: "I wish we'd said that."

Approximately a third of a mil-  
lion Cubans have fled their island,  
leaving behind possessions, homes  
and life-savings. Menocal is one  
of those who lost everything, but  
he is now vice president of Amer-  
ican Foreign Power Co., the Latin  
subsidiary of Electric Bond and  
Share Co. Let us hope that he can  
awaken other businessmen of the  
hemisphere to the importance of  
keeping a watchful eye on their  
own governments.

Perhaps in Central and South  
America his appeal, based on per-  
sonal experience, will carry more  
impact than any amount of chid-  
ing by our State Department. And  
let's not lull ourselves into think-  
ing that "it can't happen here,"  
too.

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